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remain untold. If this be true, then it is evident that all besides the one thing, which by reason of fitness is to be the vehicle of the sentiment, should be kept subordinate, so that if we choose to analyze the work, we should find the humility of obedience pervading the whole, of lesser forces to the one chief power, and of all to the most important sense of the theme. Sunbeams and gold: golden sunlight and earth which is involved in the idea of yellow light; these, and life, and love, were the powers which influenced the mood of Titian as he wrought upon this picture. Gold as used by the poet, I doubt not, served to express forcibly though indirectly the fullness of light burning over the earth, the intensity of rays striking the earth's surface. This is also employed as an agent in the picture, but in a degree of lesser importance, the indirectness attending the use of that idea being no longer a necessity. A step was added in this one point, and the artist stood a degree nearer nature than the poet. There is the representation of the material of gold, the glitter of which is subdued to a quiet, unobtrusive light, content to *assist* in the work of expression, and claiming for itself no exclusive attention; nevertheless, not for one instant relinquishing its title to all the properties of pure gold, and not for a moment unconscious of its value and rank. It was of value in the language of the myth, as intensifying the gorgeous yellow of the sun's beams, and when we consider that those beams are *white* until they reach our atmosphere, it will be seen how beautiful and forcible the figure is in rendering the idea of light, which has already passed through our atmosphere, and not only that, but has touched the earth's surface, and arisen again into the air.

Now observe the painter's strength. He keeps the gold that the understanding may be satisfied; that the idea may be made known, and as a beautiful and fit conventionalism wherewith to associate the higher natural language on which he depended for the realization of his feeling. He uses a hue which is that of pure sunlight, modified by the semi-transparent atmosphere, and deepened by contact with gold, and with this hue suffuses the whole space portrayed in the picture; not alone to secure richness of tone, but because the hue was the correspondent to the vivifying, and therefore the most important power of the myth. Every object is bathed in golden glory—every point and prominence is surcharged and throws abundant light down into the hollow of draperies—into the recesses where hide the retiring shadows—into the parting of hair, and the spaces between clustered flowers—all the air is filled with ethereal gold, as if for endless day—you feel it in all its significance, you comprehend its intent, though you retire along the dim gallery until golden vases, flowers, draperies, and Danaë herself are merged in one inseparable glow of radiant color.

But I must not forget her who is the recipient of this ample wealth; one who has once seen the youthful beauty of that face will not soon suffer it to escape from his memory. It is simple as that of a little girl—dignified as the face of a noble woman and blessed as the countenance of an angel. There is a peace pervading every feature which is the loftiest sign of rest—a sweeter

tranquillity only found where there has been full accomplishment of lawful demand—such peace, and such tranquillity as pervade the earth on golden noons of summer, when the loitering wind scarce moves along the dreaming wheat-fields, and the odors of flowers sleep where they were born. Mithras has been there.

But there cannot be the shadow of necessity that attention should be called to the beauty of the face, nor to that fine simplicity, that freedom from all taint of affectation which characterizes the whole figure, as well as that winged genius that stands beside her; all this will be seen by those who see the picture; but it may not be observed so readily, that, as the gold is made a subordinate power, Danaë herself is *still*—subdued; seeking, neither by any act, nor attitude, nor expression of feature to tell the story; confident in the presence of the Godlike influence which is admitted to be higher than her own strength, that whatever is necessary to be, will be revealed. She has known life, and is silent. From *her* we should derive no idea of the nature of that power which awakened life within her, for aught she betrays it may have been the cloud, or Diana.

The artist felt that even this, the principal object in the picture, was an arbitrary element, and therefore, although he has given her a most lovable beauty, and has bestowed unusual pains upon the clear and luminous rendering up of the flesh-tints—he has not made it the principal vehicle of his thought, as in another treatment of the same subject, infinitely below this in truthfulness of conception; but has placed her in sympathy with her spectator, rather as mutual listener to the language of nature, mutual recipients of life-giving influences, emanating immediately from the sun in the form of light and heat, these, themselves, being types also of a spiritual light and heat, which in the thought of the religious philosopher of Stockholm are called love and wisdom, and of a spiritual sun whence these proceed.

Paul Akers.

Rome, May, 1855.

WANDERINGS IN THE SOUTHWEST.

NO. V.

SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR, June 11th, 1855.

Two elements which enter into the topography of Western Texas will give the key to the principal facts of its physical geography. There are, firstly, the cretaceous formation, which prevails over all those parts that I have visited, and, secondly, the excessive rains to which it is subject at certain seasons of the year. All the rock that I have seen, and I am told that there is no other until you reach the interior regions drained by the waters of the upper Colorado, where the primary formations abound, corresponds in all respects to the formation of the Paris basin. All the fossils which I have found are represented in that formation, though of differing species. Among these are ammonites, several species of *Exogyra*, *nautilus*, &c. The hills are all of limestone, covered in most places with a thick coat of detritus and siliceous stones intermixed with fossil shells.

This rock so closely resembles the French Caen stone of which the public buildings of Paris, and Westminster Abbey are built, and

which has recently been imported into New York, that if I were to place a fragment of each before you, you would be at a loss to decide which came from Texas and which from France. It is unquestionably the best building material in use, so soft, that when quarried it may be cut with an axe, or split into slabs with a saw, and hardening by exposure to the air. Whether it will bear the exposure to the severe frosts of the North is a question which the people of New York will, no doubt, have an opportunity to determine. Its strata I have not found disturbed by igneous forces, and the softness and porosity of some of them has given rise to some very curious phenomena. At Leona Springs, sixty miles from Eagle Pass, on the Rio Grande, a subterranean river breaks out just where the mountain region ends and the alluvial begins; four miles above this place, the San Antonio takes its rise in the same manner, not in one volume as has been represented, but in the immediate vicinity and apparently from nearly the same stratum, swelling in the distance of a quarter of a mile into a stream not sensibly augmented by all the streams that flow into it, at this time of drouth, above the junction of the Medina. It is a clear, sparkling, rapid, but noiseless stream, filling its channel full, suffering no change with the vicissitudes of moisture or temperature, to which the country is subject. Pecans, the loftiest and most beautiful tree on the plains, throw their shades over it. The loaded vines of the mustang grape drop their clusters into its waters, while ferns clothe its margin in the richest green. One of these springs is worth a long journey to see. It is like a well ten or twelve feet deep, running over full of water of the very standard of purity. As you lean against the tree that declines over it and look down into it, you could not tell but for a slight ripple on its surface where the atmosphere ends and water begins. A plant with a small peltate leaf of bright green lines the rock down to the bottom, and is scattered over the white sandy floor, and each is in constant vibration as the water rises past them. The temperature, like that of all those springs of which I could get any reliable information, is a little higher than the mean atmospheric temperature of the year. This is an exception to Humboldt's rule, that in all hot climates the average temperature of the springs is lower. The temperature of the springs here is 74° and does not vary much from that during the year; however, I am inclined to believe that a careful record has not been kept. I only know positively that the temperature now is as I have stated. At New Braunsfels is another river, starting one mile from town, and flowing past it with a volume equal to that of the San Antonio, but its channel receives the drainage of a considerable region of country above during the rainy season, and is therefore, shut in by high alluvial banks. At San Marcos, east of the Colorado, is said to be still another of these famous springs. I have spoken in a previous letter of the sudden disappearance of the Cívolo about thirty miles north of this. From that place there is a dry channel for a distance of forty miles, when water again appears in the form of springs, making a stream of half the size of the Cívolo where its waters sink in the limestone rock. There seems to be no reason—

able ground of belief that the streams are identical, for the circumstances that determine the course of a river on the surface of the earth, cannot be supposed to control its subterranean channel. I am more inclined to believe that the upper Oivolo, after its disappearance, being augmented by the drainage of the region under which it flows, finds its exit at the Comal Springs, many miles nearer. In the excursion which I shall make this week to the Leona and the Nueces, I may be able to add something to this subject. The geological division of the region I have travelled over should be made by a line drawn through this belt of springs, that above being limestone, and that below, with some exceptions, being alluvial, that distinction being not so apparent as might be supposed, did we not take into account the soft and perishable nature of the rock, and the force of heavy floods. The hills below the springs are chiefly of an alluvium of chalk, containing recent shells, of species now living. It is used for building purposes, but is so soft and friable as scarcely to admit of handling, nor does it become hard by exposure. Near Helena, this white alluvium appears, but lower down. There is, strictly speaking, but little prairie land in Western Texas, as might be inferred from what I have said already. The elevation, though almost imperceptible, is uniform from the sea coast to this place, which has an elevation of six hundred feet. The rivers all have a uniform current from the limestone region to the sea. The country intersected by them is, near the sea, generally level, but ravines begin to show themselves before you have travelled five miles; these increase in size as you penetrate the country; and the surface becomes rolling, or hilly even, to people whose ideas have been formed in a level country. These are the general features, modified, of course, by local causes of no general interest. I cannot avoid observing, in passing, the great contrast that obtains between Texas and California, in respect to this physical feature. In all these points the alluvial districts of the latter country are directly the reverse. The Sacramento, or its tributaries, receive no accession from the plains, but, on the contrary, the water flows from the river on the plains; the land is highest on the bank of the river. It would be interesting to trace the difference further, even into the vegetation, as in the preponderance of the grasses over the flowering plants in Texas; the almost entire usurpation of the latter in California: but I am writing of Texas. One that has travelled through Texas need not be told that it is subject to periods of excessive rains—the whole features of the country, ancient and recent, betray the fact: but the drainage of the country is so good that, though there are but few bridges or ferries, communication through the country is said to be not long suspended. During the summer there is less rain falls than in the north—not sufficient to affect the streams to any great degree. During the last month there have been three thunder-storms passing over this place coming from the north-west; the last was followed by a light north wind for three days—during the rest of the time a breeze has been blowing from the southeast, by day and by night; this, taken in connection with the dryness of the atmosphere, which is remarkable, have

the effect to make the climate comfortable in the shade, during the hottest weather. This breeze is generally so strong, as to blow papers across the room; but to say that the sun does not do his work well, would be doing him great injustice.

The thermometer generally stands, at noon, in the shade, on the north side of the house at 90°, yet the starch in my collar—we do wear collars here—would not be softened, a catastrophe that would be sure to take place in New York with a temperature of 80° in the coldest place I could find. Laborers work all day in the sun, yet I never heard of a case of *coup de soleil*, cause why, the evaporation from their bodies keeps the temperature of them down, and they don't "melt their kidneys." As an artist, you will say that the atmosphere is "cold," the sky is intensely blue, the green on the most distant hill is, at this season—understand I only speak positively of what I know—as green as that in the neighboring garden, the sun shows fight to the last, and wherever his latest beam falls upon you, it feels like the concentrated focus of a sun-glass; he goes not down with a "battle-stained eye." You see, therefore, there is no chance for the melo-dramatic effect of your hot-house landscape painters. No dew falls at night; though the nights are not warm, one may sleep on the ground with impunity, as many do habitually, at this season, as I have done often, and as I intend to do for the next two weeks, in a country where there has no white man settled. Perhaps, I may get back my beloved pony. We shall go, half a dozen of us, well armed, and, perhaps the Indians will try to steal some more horses! Having no marshes, there are no mosquitos; or, at least, so few as scarcely to be represented in the entomology of this vicinity: they are said to be extremely troublesome nearer the coast. I have not observed the fly that is so troublesome to horses in high latitudes, and they have not, therefore, the habit of stamping the ground: there is a large green fly here that stings them, but they are rare. Per contra, there is an insect here abounding through the early part of the year, but disappearing about the middle of summer; they pervade all places, and are most abundant where they are most to be expected, but when you put your finger on them they ain't there; a genus, with nocturnal habits, that may be cultivated in beds adapted to them, with but little attention. The only order of insects that abound here in great variety are the coleoptera or beetle family; it is too dry for butterflies. Of the orthoptera there are some fine representatives, one of which is the mantis, whose fabulous character has made it an object of superstition among all people where it is found. Lindheimer, the botanist, told me, at New Braunsfels, that he had domesticated one to catch flies about his house, in which it was very useful, and lived with him a long time. There is, also, found here a phasmida, a stick with six legs, and nearly as many inches long, one of the largest of the whole insect class.

I have taken much pains to ascertain what may be done here in the cultivation of fruit. It is apparent from what I have already written that the characteristics of this climate, are those of the temperate rather than the torrid region. Under the

Mexican population no attempt was made to cultivate what required much care; and the white emigration has been too recent to permit them to devote much time to the luxuries of life. I have been told by those who have been long in the country, that the ants would destroy fruit trees by stripping them of their leaves, and that there was no way of destroying them. At this place I find several gentlemen who have turned their attention to that branch of horticulture. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Vance have both fine gardens. They have succeeded in destroying the ants—one, by digging; the other, by poisoning with arsenic. The latter mode is the cheapest and most effectual. Mr. Vance mixed arsenic with corn-meal, and placed it near their nests daily, until there is not to be found one upon his premises. In his grounds, which are irrigated from a well this year for the first time, he has peaches, plums, apples, pomegranates, figs, cherries, apricots and grapes, all thriving well. Figs are abundant all along the river, where they have survived the decline of industry, in places now otherwise waste places. Pomegranates need no attention; the El Paso grape needs but little care, and is the finest grape in the country. I saw a cluster in Mr. Vance's garden, on which I counted over three hundred grapes, and it makes the finest wine. Mr. Lewis has not irrigated, and he has found no difficulty with any of the above-mentioned fruits. He raises an abundance of peaches, and his apple-trees, though small, have this year several bushels growing upon them, and he says their flavor is equal to any that are raised at the North; his trees, however, were sent from the North, and I suspect that the character of a fruit will degenerate by an acclimation. The apple thrives well in Peru, South America, but its flavor is lost. The banana succeeds well on the coast, but here it has not been tried; it requires a humid climate. There are orange-trees growing, but not old enough to prove their capability to bear. The drouth of the present season, unprecedented in the experience of the fruit-growers, will prove a severe test to those trees, not irrigated. That this region of Texas is not subject to frost is a fable; it was so severe last winter as to kill all the fig-trees that I have seen, except those in that town; and its severity here was abated by the temperature of the San Antonio river, which is said never to be lower at this place than 70°. Shoots are springing up again with great vigor from the roots. The Mustang grape grows in the greatest abundance along all the streams, and is the only indigenous fruit of any great value. It is very large; one that I measured this week, as an average sized grape, was two and a half inches in circumference, and I am told that they have not yet attained their full growth. One could make the finest jelly, at no cost, except for the sugar. There is a species of plum growing wild along the water-courses, said to be very delicious, but the fruit was cut off this season by the late frosts. Many years since, under the rule of the missions, thousands of acres, extending over a region eight miles long and from two to four wide, were under high cultivation; the ditches that were dug still remain, and venerable pecans growing upon their banks attest to their antiquity, but the fields which they

irrigated are now waste. A few recent inclosures by Germans and Americans are cultivated, and, by deeper plowing, they find irrigation not so necessary, for most purposes, as was supposed by the Mexicans.

The monuments which those old Spanish missionaries have left on the San Antonio furnish the chief object of interest to passing strangers, and their history carries us back to a time coeval with the settlement of some of our Old Thirteen. One is astonished at their enterprise, and the magnitude of their labors, not only in cultivation of a wilderness surrounded by the most formidable savages on the continent, but the edifices they built, elegant even now in their ruins. The style of these edifices is that so common through all the old Spanish colonies—they are massive and rudely elegant. Within a distance of nine miles, there are three of these mission buildings. A ride from town down the bank of the river in the shade of the pecan trees to the first one forms a favorite excursion in the afternoon, and to those who have not seen a fine ruin before, it rewards them well. As you approach it, the dome and towers still appear entire above the rich green of the trees, and gilded by the setting sun. I rode my horse through the door of the church and stood under the dome still retaining the painted fresco devices. The corners of the arch of the transept were completely occupied by bats; indeed, the whole place was but a hive of them, and if Proserpine had held her court there, they could not have been more numerous. It was just about the time that they issue forth, and some stones thrown into their dense masses awakened them from the torpor of the day, and they swarmed out in myriads, keeping an unbroken column until they had well cleared the ruin, and then it was every bat for himself, and wo to every insect that was found on the wing. When we left the place, the stream of bats still continued unabated. The ride down the bank of the river furnishes some very picturesque scenery, unlike anything I have seen elsewhere, not extensive, but perfect bijoux for an artist. The Mexican character of this city is fast disappearing under the superior enterprise and taste of its new inhabitants, but much of the old order still remains. The church of the Alamo, now used for government stores, still stands with its battle-scarred walls, where Crockett and his companions fell. I think there is no place in America that has been the theatre of more desperate fights, even from the earliest times, and no place is more fruitful of the material of romance than this same place, but its history is unwritten, and the few who remain of those who participated in the most modern of its legends are fast passing away. The plaza has still many of the little one story adobe buildings, more like a wall, with windows and doors alternately, which were witnesses of the incursions of the Camanches; these still stand, and a gamecock tied to the door-post tells that a descendant of the founders of the colony there keeps a store. The bell of the church daily rings its matin and vesper chimes, as it rung them nearly two centuries ago; but there has risen by their side the well-built stores of the invader which overtops them, where the auctioneer is knocking down goods at "immense sacrifice," and along the river

are little villas that are fast rivalling those of Italy. When I first rode into town, I felt something of disappointment—I knew it was a frontier town which, in 1850, had but 3,000 inhabitants, and the Mexican hovels, the multitude of dogs and half-naked children that inhabited them, combined with a feeling of loneliness—that I was a stranger nearly 2,000 miles from any friend, depressed me. But when I looked about the country stretching away in every direction for hundreds of miles, of which this must be the commercial centre, became acquainted with the great number of enterprising northern men and indomitable Germans that have settled here, swelling her population in five years to 10,000; the peculiar advantages of this river head, winding about the place and passing everybody's door-yard; the delicious climate, that combines the mildness of the South with the healthfulness of the North, I felt a regret that I must leave it, and could not occupy one of the many beautiful little nooks on the river bank, where I might permit my life to flow as pure and tranquilly as its waters. But I am in a reverie. I would recommend to builders and carpenters to direct their attention to this place. Good workmen will command two dollars and fifty cents a day, and three dollars, but to New York builders who will come out here with the capital to buy lots, and build to sell again, there is an easy fortune. The wood-work should be made at the North and sent to Port Lavaca, thence it is transported by Mexican ox-teams. It is only necessary for me to state the fact, that so great is the rage for investment in live stock and land, that money commands five per cent. a month on the best securities; rents are very high, because there are so many better ways of investing money than in building houses to let, even at such high rents. There is a stir and vigorous life here that I have seen in no inland city of the old states.

J. D. B. S.

GIOTTO AND HIS WORKS IN PADUA.

BY JOHN RUSKIN.

(Continued.)

INDEED, I can hardly imagine the Bible to be ever read with true interest, unless, in one reading, we feel some longing for further knowledge of the minute incidents of the life of Christ—for some records of those things, which, "if they had been written every one," the world could not have contained the books that should be written; and they who have once felt this thirst for further truth, may surely both conceive and pardon the earnest questioning of simple disciples (who know not, as we do, how much had been indeed revealed), and measure with some justice the strength of the temptation which betrayed these teachers into adding to the word of Revelation. Together with this specious and subtle influence, we must allow for the instinct of imagination exerting itself in the acknowledged embellishment of beloved truths. If we reflect how much, even in this age of accurate knowledge, the visions of Milton have become confused in the minds of many persons, with scriptural facts, we shall rather be surprised, that in an age of legends, so little should be added to the Bible, than that occasionally we

should be informed of important circumstances in sacred history with the collateral warning "This Moses spoke not of."*

More especially in the domain of painting, it is surprising to see how strictly the early workmen confined themselves to representations of the same series of scenes; how little of pictorial embellishment they usually added; and how, even in the positions and gestures of figures, they strove to give the idea rather of their having seen the *fact*, than imagined a picturesque treatment of it. Often, in examining early Art, we mistake conscientiousness for servility, and attribute to the absence of invention what was indeed the result of the earnestness of faith.

Nor, in a merely artificial point of view, is it less important to note, that the greatest advance in power was made when painters had few subjects to treat. The day has perhaps come, when genius should be shown in the discovery of perpetually various interest amidst the incidents of actual life; and the absence of inventive capacity is very assuredly proved by the narrow selection of subjects which commonly appear on the walls of our exhibitions. But yet, it is to be always remembered, that more originality may be shown in giving interest to a well-known subject than in discovering a new one; that the greatest poets whom the world has seen, have been contented to re-touch and exalt the creations of their predecessors; and that the painters of the middle ages reached their utmost power by unweariedly treading a narrow circle of sacred subjects.

Nothing is, indeed, more notable in the history of Art, than the exact balance of its point of excellence, in all things, midway between servitude and license. Thus, in choice and treatment of subject, it becomes paralyzed among the Byzantines, by being mercilessly confined to a given series of scenes, and to a given mode of representing them. Giotto gave it partial liberty and incipient life; by the artists who succeeded him the range of its scenery was continually extended, and the severity of its style slowly softened to perfection. But the range was still, in some degree, limited by the necessity of its continual subordination to religious purposes; and the style, though softened, was still chaste, and though tender, self-restrained. At last came the period of license: the artist chose his subjects from the lowest scenes of human life, and let loose his passions in their portraiture. And the kingdom of Art passed away.

As if to direct us to the observation of this great law, there is a curious visible type of it in the progress of ornamentation in manuscripts, corresponding with the various changes in the higher branch of Art. In the course of the 12th and early 13th centuries, the ornamentation, though often full of high feeling and fantasy, is sternly enclosed within limiting border-lines; at first, severe squares, oblongs, or triangles. As the grace of the ornamentation advances, these border-lines are softened and broken into various curves, and the inner design begins here and there to overpass them. Gradually this emergence becomes

* These words are gravely added to some singular particulars respecting the life of Adam, related in a MS. of the sixteenth century preserved in the Herald's College.